

A Guide on Interacting with Prospective Landlords

Things to be Aware of When Searching for Housing

- Even though you may not have a lot of options (high rental prices or little availability), it is helpful to view and compare different units.
- When viewing an apartment, turn appliances on and off to ensure that they are in good working condition, test the water pressure in the kitchen and bathroom, Do not be afraid to ask the landlord any questions you may have, particularly about the terms and conditions of the lease.
- Ask the landlord what type of routine maintenance is done on the apartment and how repair issues are handled.
- Consider talking to current tenants to find out how they like living in the building.

Knowing Your Rights as a Tenant

There are certain requirements landlords can legally request when renting to an individual. However; the following list includes what a landlord cannot ask for or specify:

- A landlord cannot discriminate against you based on your ethnicity, age, gender, if you are employed or use government supports
- A damage deposit to be paid without proof they will be renting you the unit.
- Landlords cannot demand that you do not use substances or have overnight guests. They can state that a unit or building is smoke free meaning you must go outside to smoke.
- A landlord cannot legally evict you for having a pet. However, you can be evicted if your pet causes damage, or if you share a ventilation system with another tenant who has a medically diagnosed allergy to your pet.
- A key deposit can cost as much as the cost of a replacement key.
- A lease can be written or verbal, or implied, once there is an exchange of funds for a living accommodation.



- A landlord cannot request post-dated cheques from you.

For more information on tenant rights please visit [Service Ontario](#) Or [Durham Community Legal Clinic](#).

The first phone call to the landlord

- Be prepared to take notes around details.
- Be prepared for an answering machine and write a script of what to say ahead of time before leaving a message.
- Know the date you can move and what amount of rent you can afford.
- Write down the name of the person you talked to, their phone number, and the date you called in case you need to ask more questions or schedule/reschedule an appointment.
- Ask the landlord what date you can follow up with them by.
- Make note of all the landlords you have contacted. This will help you remember when scheduled viewings, which apartments you have applied for, and who you need to follow up with.
- See attachment [Landlord Contact Chart](#)

Confirming the viewing

- Ask for a time and date to view the unit.
- Always view the unit before agreeing to rent.
- Remember to thank the landlord for their time and let them know you are looking forward to seeing the unit. This is your first impression with the landlord.

Preparing for the viewing

Here's a list of what you should bring:

- Copies of your documentation.
- Something to write notes in and something to take pictures with.



- If you are seeing more than one apartment, then take the chart titled [“Apartment Comparison Checklist”](#).
- When conversing with the landlord share positive reasons for re-locating, such as a new job, need a change, etc.
- Do not share past problems with other landlords or engage in a negative conversation about your personal situation.

Tips on Responding to Questions from a Potential Landlord

Common Landlord Questions

Some landlords may ask why you are looking for housing or for information about your rental history. Below are some tips to help you answer these questions:

- Do not share past problems with other landlords or engage in a negative conversation about your personal situation. This information is private to you and your situation.
- The landlord may ask you about your credit and rental history. What information you share is up to you. Generally, it is best to be truthful (without giving too many details) and to take responsibility for your mistakes.
- If a question feels inappropriate or too personal, think about why the landlord is asking it and respond in a way that speaks to that concern.

Some sample responses to help you practice

Landlord: “Are you on social assistance”? What is your income?”

Potential renter: “At this time I am looking for work, but I have the funds to pay for my rent.”

Landlord: “Do you have employment”?

Potential renter: “I am able to pay the rent you are charging, and I can give you a reference to show that I am a reliable tenant.”

